

Welcome to Erie County RSVP: *Where Volunteers Make a Difference!*

What is RSVP?

RSVP is a federal volunteer program for people ages 55+ who want to put their skills and life experiences to work for their communities. The goal of RSVP is to identify enriching and rewarding experiences for volunteers, while meeting critical needs in the community.

A brief history

RSVP is one of the largest volunteer programs in the United States. Erie County RSVP, started in 1972, was one of the first eleven projects in the country.

Today, approximately 1,200 Erie County RSVP volunteers provide over 180,000 hours of service at almost 100 non-profit and public organizations! Funding is provided by the County of Erie, the Corporation for National Service, and the NYS Office for the Aging.

Contact us

Office hours: Monday – Friday,
8 am to 4:30 pm

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E-Mail: dowlingp@erie.gov

Website: www.erie.gov/rsvp

Address: RSVP of Erie County
Department of Senior Services
95 Franklin Street
Buffalo, NY 14202

The RSVP staff

Patricia Dowling	Project Director
Sharon Measer	Secretary
Blanca Rodriguez	Community Aide
William Scott	Transportation
Thomas Melson	Transportation

What do RSVP Volunteers do?

Just about everything! And the possibilities are endless.

RSVP volunteers serve without pay, as often as they wish. There is no minimum number of service hours. Best of all, RSVP assists volunteers to find the best match for their skills, interests, and schedule.

RSVP volunteers serve at hospitals, home-delivered meal programs, schools, museums, nature preserves, historic sites, food pantries, and many more.

Special Projects

RSVP Special Projects are perfect for volunteers who prefer a flexible schedule, or want to try out a variety of volunteer experiences. Examples of Special Projects are volunteering for a few hours at the Taste of Buffalo, the SABAH ice show, annual MDA “Lock-Up”, and others.

RSVP e-mails information about these events to volunteers who are on-line, and posts these on the RSVP website at www.erie.gov/rsvp.

It's a great way to meet new people, have fun, and help out a worthy cause!

As an RSVP Volunteer, we request that you..

- Fill out your timesheet each time you report to your volunteer assignment. You can submit hours by paper timesheet, fax, or e-mail to the RSVP office.
- Keep us informed. Please call and let us know if you will not be volunteering for a extended period of time due to vacation, etc... Also let us know if you'd like to try something different or you are unhappy for any reason. We are here to serve you and make volunteering a rewarding, enjoyable experience.
- Talk to us if you have any suggestions or concerns. We value your input.
- Let others know about RSVP, and the benefits of becoming an RSVP volunteer. Please wear your RSVP badge while on assignment.
- Consider taking a leadership role in RSVP by becoming part of the RSVP Advisory Council.

RSVP Advisory Council

The RSVP Advisory Council is made up of RSVP volunteers, volunteer supervisors, and community leaders. The Council provides guidance and advice to strengthen the role of RSVP in the community, helps to evaluate the effectiveness of RSVP in meeting the needs of the volunteers and the community, and raises essential support for volunteer recognition.

Benefits to becoming an RSVP Volunteer

- Supplemental accident, liability and automobile insurance. Please refer to the brochure in your packet for specifics. This insurance is in excess of your primary insurance. Please notify the RSVP office as soon as possible in the event of an accident.
- Travel reimbursement to and from your volunteer assignment whether you drive or take public transportation.
- Semi-annual newsletter *RSVP Connections* keeping you informed about the activities of volunteers and sites.
- Volunteers who complete at least 40 hours of service during the year are invited as our guests to the annual volunteer Tribute Day luncheon, attended by more than 700 volunteers.

RSVP Van

For volunteers unable to drive or take public transportation to their volunteer assignment, RSVP provides transportation, free of charge, in a seven-person van that operates 4 days per week. Just call us to be added to the schedule.

***Your time and talents are a valuable resource to this community.
Thank you for donating them.***

Independence Through Aging & Disability

HOME DELIVERED MEAL PROGRAMS

Home delivered meal programs enable many frail elderly citizens to remain in their own homes. Volunteers work in teams of two-- a driver and a server. Volunteers deliver a nutritionally balanced, two-meal package to each participant. Equally important, volunteers provide a brief friendly visit and check on the participant's well-being.

- AMHERST MEALS ON WHEELS
- GRAND ISLAND MEALS ON WHEELS
- KEN-TON MEALS ON WHEELS
- MEALS ON WHEELS FOR WNY
- SOUTHTOWNS MEALS ON WHEELS
(serving Boston, Colden, Concord, Holland and Sardinia)
- SPRINGVILLE MEALS ON WHEELS



EXERCISE AND FITNESS PROGRAMS

The Erie County Dept. of Senior Services is seeking dependable, outgoing and enthusiastic individuals to volunteer as fitness instructors. Volunteers receive training, and are assigned to a senior center near their home.

- ERIE COUNTY DEPT. OF SENIOR SERVICES SENIOR FITNESS PROGRAM

COMPANIONSHIP/ OUTREACH

Social isolation is a daily experience for many older people who are widowed, homebound, or who live far from family. Social isolation increases risk for other problems such as depression or poor nutrition. RSVP volunteers connect with frail, isolated individuals through

*Phoning or visiting homebound elderly or disabled individuals.

*Helping with errands and light housekeeping and yard work.

- AMERICAN RED CROSS LONG TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM
- COMMUNITY CONCERN
- TELEPHONE ASSURANCE PROGRAM (TAP)

ADULT DAY HEALTH SERVICES

Adult day care program provide nutritious meals, socialization, and recreational outings for frail elderly participants, and a few hours of respite for family caregivers. Volunteers assist with daily programs such as exercise, games, field trips, and reminiscence.

- TOWN OF AMHERST ADULT DAY CARE PROGRAM
- TOWN OF HAMBURG ADULT DAY CARE PROGRAM

RESPITE

Alzheimer's disease affects 1 in 10 Americans over 65, and takes a heavy toll on family caregivers. Volunteers provide 2 hours of in-home companionship and supervision for an individual with dementia while providing a much-needed break for a family caregiver. (Volunteers **do not** provide personal care or assistance with ambulation.)

- ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION- WESTERN NEW YORK CHAPTER

SERVICES ASSISTING DISABLED PERSONS

- EXCALIBUR LEISURE SKILLS CENTER, INC.

Excalibur provides cost-free boating and fishing opportunities for disabled and disadvantaged persons. A wheelchair accessible boat gives Excalibur's guests the opportunity to enjoy access to a day of boating and fishing on the waters of Lake Erie. Volunteers assist the captain to ensure that the guests have a safe and enjoyable voyage.

- SKATING ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND & HANDICAPPED (SABAH)

SABAH builds competence and confidence of children and adults with disabilities through an ice skating program that culminates each year in an Ice Skating Extravaganza. Volunteers who enjoy skating can become a partner of one of the special "stars". Volunteers also can check in skaters, tie skates, assist with equipment, or sew costumes.

- LOTHLORIEN THERAPEUTIC RIDING CENTER

Therapeutic horseback riding can improve the physical, mental and emotional well being of individuals with disabilities. At Lothlorian in East Aurora, volunteers assist students who need assistance riding their horses, or lead the horse or walk beside the rider to give cues and encouragement. Volunteers also are needed to groom and tack the horses.

- NIAGARA FRONTIER RADIO READING SERVICE

Niagara Frontier Radio Reading Service is radio that reads for people who can't. Volunteers broadcast 24-hour-a-day readings of newspapers, magazines, books, and other information.

- COMPEER OF GREATER BUFFALO

Volunteers needed to provide friendship and positive role models, and to help raise self-esteem and increase social skills for children and adults diagnosed with mental illness.

- DEL-NOR

Volunteers assist with recreational and arts program at the Buffalo Psychiatric Center's social day program.

VOLUNTEER TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS

- **RURAL TRANSIT SERVICES**

(serving Boston/Colden/Eden, Clarence/Newstead, Concord, Collins/North Collins, Brant/Evans, Holland/Sardinia, Marilla/Elma/Wales/Aurora, Orchard Park) Volunteers work as van drivers, driver aides and dispatchers to provide transportation for elderly, disabled, and low-income adults.

- **AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY'S ROAD TO RECOVERY PROGRAM**

Volunteers use their own vehicles to provide transportation for cancer patients to treatment sites.

- **VETERANS ADMINISTRATION / DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
TRANSPORTATION NETWORK**

Volunteers are needed as van drivers and dispatchers to provide transportation for veterans to medical appointments at the VA.

- **HEARTS AND HANDS: FAITH IN ACTION**

Volunteers are linked with frail elderly and disabled in Alden, Akron, Newstead, the Tonawanda Indian Reservation, Wales, and surrounding rural areas to provide transportation to shopping and medical appointments.



Education & Mentoring

YOUTH AND MENTORING

Would you like to be a positive role model for a young person who is struggling with difficulties in family, school, and community? Volunteer mentors provide tutoring, accompany students on social outings, or just listen and be a friend.

- BIG BROTHERS / BIG SISTERS OF BUFFALO OF ERIE COUNTY

PRE-SCHOOL & ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

RSVP volunteers “go back to school” to assist elementary school children in classrooms, computer labs, and after-school programs:

*One-on-one tutoring with children who need extra help in reading and math.

*Helping children learn to research a topic in the library or on the computer;

- BLASDELL (Blasdel Elementary)
- BUFFALO (D’Youville Porter Campus School #3, Tapestry Charter School)
- GRAND ISLAND (Charlotte Sidway School)
- HAMBURG (Armor Elementary, Boston Valley, Charlotte Ave., Union-Pleasant)
- LANCASTER (Como Park Elementary School, William Street School)
- WEST SENECA (Winchester Elementary, Potter Road Elementary)
- WILLIAMSVILLE (Forest Elementary, Maple East Elementary)
- AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS: Gloria Parks Community Center, ENERGY at Westminster Presbyterian Church
- PRE-SCHOOL: Holy Cross Head Start Centers -Tonawanda, Akron, Buffalo



ADULT LITERACY

Volunteers are urgently needed to tutor adults to increase reading skills for job requirements and daily living skills, or to achieve a certificate of high school equivalency.

- GERARD PLACE EDUCATION CENTER
- LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY

FINANCIAL LITERACY

Bring your enthusiasm and real-life experience to teach children in K-12 about career exploration, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy such as how to balance a checkbook, save for a down payment on a house, etc. Junior Achievement provides training, curriculum and a classroom ready to meet you at a school convenient to you.

- JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT OF WNY

UNIVERSITY EXPRESS / LIFELONG LEARNING

Learning doesn't stop at the age of 60 – it's a lifelong project!

If you are a retired university faculty or professional willing to volunteer to teach stimulating academic courses ranging from astronomy to zoology, from bioinformatics to world religions, we want to hear from you. Volunteer faculty will find mature students who are enthusiastic, willing to question and discuss, and attending because they want to learn!

These courses are more than just the typical “community education” offering. University Express/Lifelong Learning provides opportunities for older adults to enjoy the fun of learning again at sites that are easily accessible with plenty of parking. There's no pressure of grades and classes have low registration fees or none at all.



Past topics have included:

- ✓ Toxins in the Great Lakes Basin
- ✓ Grover Cleveland – Saint or Sinner?
- ✓ Wild Plants You Can Eat
- ✓ Identity Theft
- ✓ Israelis & Palestinians-Two People Torn Apart by Memory and Myth
- ✓ Scientific Basis for Evolution of Earth and Life
- ✓ Family Genograms: Mapping a Family

Each year, University Express also presents the Great Decisions Series - discussions of critical issues in U.S. foreign policy facilitated by leading experts in WNY.

If you are interested in teaching any topic, call Pat Dowling of the Erie County RSVP at 858-7548 or email at dowlingp@erie.gov. The class schedule is also available by calling or on the web at www.erie.gov/rsvp.

University Express is an exciting partnership between Niagara University Continuing Education, RSVP, and other partners to bring stimulating academic classes to older adults.

Environment & Nature



WILDLIFE REHABILITATION

Join other volunteers in a wildlife hospital on a beautiful biodiverse rural property to provide supportive care to sick, injured, and orphaned wildlife with a goal of release back into nature. Volunteers assist with feeding and other care, clerical or housekeeping tasks.

- MESSINGER WOODS

CONSERVATION

Earth Team volunteers join professional conservationists as they work directly with local farmers in putting conservation practices on the land. The Earth Team helps to prevent wind and water erosion, conserve and clean up water, reduce flooding, or help citizens of all ages learn about the environment and conservation.

- USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SCIENCE EDUCATION

Do you have a passion for science? Are you committed to protecting the environment? Join volunteers who share their knowledge about the natural world with schoolchildren and other visitors to nature preserves, botanical gardens, science museum and the Zoo. Volunteers lead tours and workshops, or help to maintain trails, gardens and exhibits.

- BEAVER MEADOW NATURE CENTER
- BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY BOTANICAL GARDENS
- BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS
- BUFFALO MUSEUM OF SCIENCE
- REINSTEIN WOODS
- TIFFT NATURE PRESERVE

Arts & Cultural Heritage

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Cultural heritage destinations have an important role in revitalizing our community. Volunteers give tours, greet visitors, maintain exhibits and grounds, and assist in offices.

- AMHERST MUSEUM
- BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY NAVAL & MILITARY PARK
- BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
- FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT'S GRAYCLIFF HOUSE & ESTATE
- FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT'S DARWIN MARTIN HOUSE
- THE LANDMARK SOCIETY
- OLMSTED CONSERVANCY
- STEEL PLANT MUSEUM

PUBLIC BROADCASTING

Don't just watch the WNED Membership Campaigns--volunteer! Be a star for public broadcasting! You may even be part of a live broadcast.

- WESTERN NEW YORK BROADCASTING ASSOCIATION



Social Justice

FOOD AND CLOTHING DISTRIBUTION

RSVP volunteers are helping to address the needs of individuals and families in our community who experience difficulty meeting basic needs for food and clothing. Activities can involve

- *Stock shelves and assist recipients at food pantries and thrift stores;
- *Prepare and serve nutritious meals in community dining rooms;
- *Pick up surplus and donated food from grocery stores and restaurants, and deliver to social services agencies;
- *Assist with community gardening to supply fresh vegetables for food pantries;
- *Assist with nutrition classes and other educational initiatives.

- ASBURY SHALOM ZONE
- BUFFALO CITY MISSION
- CATHOLIC CHARITIES FOOD PANTRIES (4 SITES INCLUDE LOVEJOY, SOUTH BUFFALO, PERRY STREET, AND LACKAWANNA)
- EDEN NORTH COLLINS FOOD PANTRY
- FISH OF EAST AURORA
- THE FOOD BANK OF WNY
- THE FOOD SHUTTLE
- LADIES OF CHARITY
- LITTLE PORTION FRIARY
- OPERATION GOOD NEIGHBOR
- RESPONSE TO LOVE
- ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
- UNIVERSITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FOOD PANTRY



CROSS-CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities with an international flair!

- Welcome and mentor newly arrived refugees beginning a new life in a new home;
- Assist refugees with basic needs such as getting to medical appointments, enrolling children in school, or setting up an apartment;
- Help refugees with necessary immigration paperwork;
- Assist with office needs, public relations, and special events.
- Act as a dinner hospitality host for an international diplomat;
- Be a judge at the annual Model UN for high school and college students.
 - JOURNEY'S END
 - INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF BUFFALO
 - VIVE LA CASA

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

After release from incarceration, Cephas provides intensive support services within a structured living environment for men. Volunteers may assist with office needs or in supervised programs in the residence.

- CEPHAS / PEACEPRINTS PRISON MINISTRY

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Want to build a house? Do you enjoy swinging a hammer, measuring a board, or handling a paintbrush? Help families to achieve their dream of ownership of a simple decent house in a safe environment. Volunteers work at supervised sites in the City of Buffalo Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 9am-3pm. Training and supplies are provided. Volunteers also needed in Re-Store to sell new and used building materials.

- HABITAT FOR HUMANITY



Health Care

HOSPITALS

RSVP volunteers in local hospitals assist staff, patients and families by:

- *Visiting or providing recreational activities and companionship for patients
- *Working in surgical waiting areas to serve as a liaison between family and staff;
- *Staffing information desks or providing clerical assistance in offices and units.
- *Delivering mail and flowers to patient rooms.
- *Transporting patients to therapy and other hospital areas;



- BERTRAND CHAFFEE HOSPITAL
- BUFFALO GENERAL HOSPITAL
- ERIE COUNTY MEDICAL CENTER
- KENMORE MERCY HOSPITAL
- MERCY HOSPITAL OF BUFFALO
- MILLARD FILLMORE GATES
- MILLARD FILLMORE SUBURBAN
- ROSWELL PARK CANCER INSTITUTE
- SISTERS HOSPITAL
- ST. JOSEPH'S HOSPITAL
- TLC HEALTH NETWORK
- VETERANS ADMINISTRATION MEDICAL CENTER OF WNY
- WOMEN'S & CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF BUFFALO

HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS

RSVP volunteers assist local health organizations by assisting at blood sites, doing clerical tasks and data entry, or assisting with educational programs and fundraisers.

- AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY
- AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION
- AMERICAN RED CROSS
- ERIE COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE DISABLED
- LEUKEMIA & LYMPHOMA SOCIETY
- LUPUS ALLIANCE OF WESTERN NEW YORK

HOSPICE

Hospice is a philosophy of caring whose goal is to help people live life fully, maintain dignity, and keep personal control over their lives. Hospice provides medical care, emotional and spiritual support to people with advanced illness and their families. Volunteers may visit Hospice patients at home, or assist at the Hospice House.

- HOSPICE BUFFALO, INC.

LONG TERM CARE FACILITIES

RSVP volunteers who assist in local nursing homes add to the residents' quality of life.

*Assisting with recreational activities, special events, and field trips;

*Providing music, entertainment, or teaching a craft to the residents;

*Friendly visits with residents;

*Transporting residents to therapy and other destinations;

*Assisting in offices; or delivering mail to resident rooms.

- BRISTOL HOME
- BROMPTON HEIGHTS
- BROTHERS OF MERCY NURSING & REHABILITATION CENTER
- ERIE COUNTY HOME
- GLENWELL ASSISTED LIVING
- HEATHWOOD HEALTH CARE FACILITY
- LUTHERAN CHURCH HOME
- MAPLEWOOD HEALTH CARE CENTER
- THE MCGUIRE GROUP (GARDEN GATE MANOR, SENECA MANOR)
- ST. FRANCIS HOME
- WEINBERG CAMPUS

AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD TRANSPORT: Volunteers use their own vehicles or Red Cross vans to transport vital blood supplies to health care facilities or testing sites.



Information & Assistance Programs

HEALTH INSURANCE INFORMATION COUNSELING AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

HIICAP volunteers provide free, confidential, accurate and unbiased information to older adults about health insurance options, including Medicare, managed care, Medigap insurances and long term care insurance.

CENTRAL REFERRAL SERVICE

Are you looking for an opportunity to use your problem solving, communication, and computer skills? Volunteers assist callers to define their specific needs, and direct them to appropriate services by using a computerized database of community services.



MORLOCK FOUNDATION

The Morlock Foundation offers helps to families whose children have serious diseases---- with medical bill negotiation, financial assistance, advocacy and respite services. Volunteers provide information and referral and assist with fund-raising events.

CONSUMER CREDIT COUNSELING SERVICE OF BUFFALO

Many families are struggling to get out of debt and stay out of bankruptcy. Trained volunteers, under supervision of a certified counselor, give 1:1 assistance or group presentations about budgeting, credit issues, and other financial concerns

HOSPITALITY AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Serve as a goodwill emissary and help travelers enjoy their trip to the Niagara Region. Volunteers provide friendly assistance at the Buffalo Niagara International Airport and strive to make each airport visitor's a positive experience. Free parking in the ramp.

BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES

RSVP volunteers at the Central Library and branches assist with shelving books, directing library patrons, and at the Encore Editions store.

Special & One-Time Events



RSVP often receives calls from organizations that are holding special events and/or projects that require volunteers to make the project successful. These volunteers help with event registrations, greeting attendants, bulk mailings, and many other projects and events. For volunteers who do not want the a set weekly schedule at one particular location but would like to help with occasional events, perhaps for only a couple of hours, these opportunity can be a perfect fit. When you go and help the agency, at the end of your shift your volunteer commitment is concluded, and no RSVP registration is needed until you decide to be involved. A few of the events RSVP volunteers have helped with include:

- SABAH Ice Show
- Taste of Buffalo
- Buffalo WingFest
- Hospice Spring Bouquet Sale
- MDA Lockup
- Kids Escaping Drugs Telethon
- Gus Macker Basketball Tournament
- And many more...

If you'd like an email notification of such events, send your email address to dowlingp@erie.gov or visit our calendar at www.erie.gov/depts/seniorservices/community/volunteer_calendar.asp to check out current possibilities.

**Looking for something rewarding to do?
Like to contribute to the community?
Want to expand your horizons?**

RSVP---Your Invitation to Serve!

If you're over 55, the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program matches **your** skills, strengths, and interests with opportunities that make a difference in your community...

- Alleviate hunger by assisting food pantries and organizations
- Help children learn to read
- Acting as tour guides at nature preserves, the zoo, or museums
- Deliver meals or make friendly phone calls to homebound people
- Drive vans so elderly and disabled persons can go where they need
- And much, much more

So that you enjoy volunteering!

Benefits of being an RSVP volunteer

- Learn and try new experiences and meet new people
- Satisfaction of knowing your time and skills are needed and appreciated
- Annual recognition event
- Supplemental accident and liability insurance

Join the team of senior volunteers making a difference in your community by calling the RSVP office 858-7548.

